

## **ERA 8: 1929-1945**

# **The Great Depression and World War II**



5<sup>th</sup> grade and High School

# Rural poverty



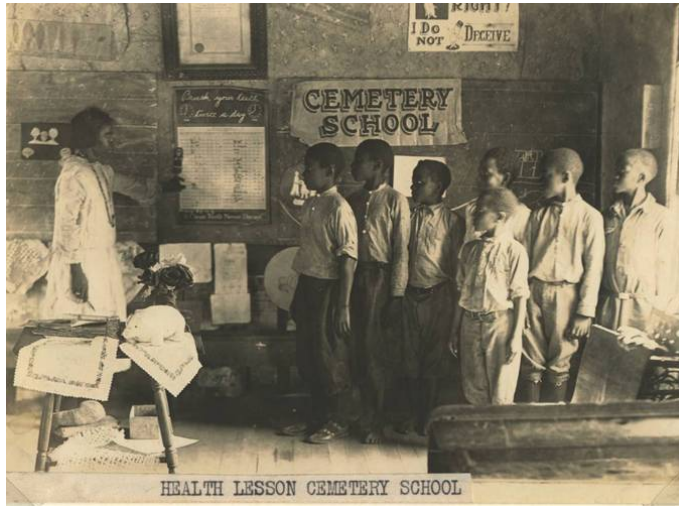
Dr. Harry Mustard Photograph Album, ca. 1925-1930, TSLA. A group of African-American children stand on a porch on the left, and two white children stand together on a porch on the right. Dr. Mustard worked in Rutherford County, Tennessee, on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation's Commonwealth Fund. He took photographs as part of a five-year study of health and sanitation conditions of rural children. Dr. Mustard went on to become a very prominent public health administrator. Many African Americans and whites from the rural South lived in poverty during the 1920s, long before the Great Depression struck the rest of the country. Farm markets were suffering after the free fall of prices after World War I, and many families were forced to leave their farms and move North. Both whites and African Americans made this great migration north in search of new jobs in urban areas such as Chicago.

## Students learning about hygiene



Dr. Harry Mustard Photograph Album, ca. 1925-1930, TSLA. A teachers instructs young students about proper health and hygiene, including eating habits. Dr. Mustard worked in Rutherford County, Tennessee, on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation's Commonwealth Fund. He took photographs as part of a five-year study of health and sanitation conditions of rural children.

## Health education in the rural South



Harry Mustard Photograph Album, ca. 1925-1930, TSLA. A teacher instructs a group of boys about the importance of brushing their teeth twice a day. Dr. Mustard worked in Rutherford County, Tennessee, on behalf of the Rockefeller Foundation's Commonwealth Fund. He took photographs as part of a five-year study of health and sanitation conditions of rural children.



## The Great Depression

After the stock market crash in 1929, America's economy went from bad to worse. More than twelve million people were out of work by 1932. Poverty was widespread, and Americans were desperate. President Herbert Hoover was unable to help. When FDR was nominated for President, he pledged a "new deal for the American people." FDR was elected in 1932, and America stood on the brink of new era in social reform.

The photograph is originally from Special Collections Division, University of Washington Libraries, and reprinted on page 83 of *War, Peace and All That Jazz: 1918-1945*, volume 9 in *A History of US*, by Joy Hakim. This man's sign reads, "Work is what I want and not charity. Who will help me get a job. 7 years in Detroit. No money sent away. Furnish best of references...".

## **A Depression-era family earning some extra money sewing baseballs**



Department of Conservation Photograph Collection, Box 7, File 5, RG 82, DB# 14597. This photograph is from 1938 in Coffee County, Tennessee. This country family from the Tullahoma area is sewing covers on baseballs which were then sold at piece rates to nickel and dime stores. When money was scarce during the Great Depression, families found creative ways to survive.

## Trading eggs and chickens for groceries during the Depression



From the Department for Conservation Photograph Collection, Box 7, File 24, RG 82, DB #14616. The image was taken in 1939 and is from Sevier County, Tennessee. This photograph shows a rolling store that let farmers trade their chickens and eggs for merchandise such as sugar and coffee. These stores were a Depression-era throwback to earlier times in Tennessee in which the barter economy predominated; a barter economy allows people to trade goods for goods rather than using money to obtain goods. This system works well when cash is scarce (or non-existent), and farmers can trade their produce for goods that they are unable to produce on their own.

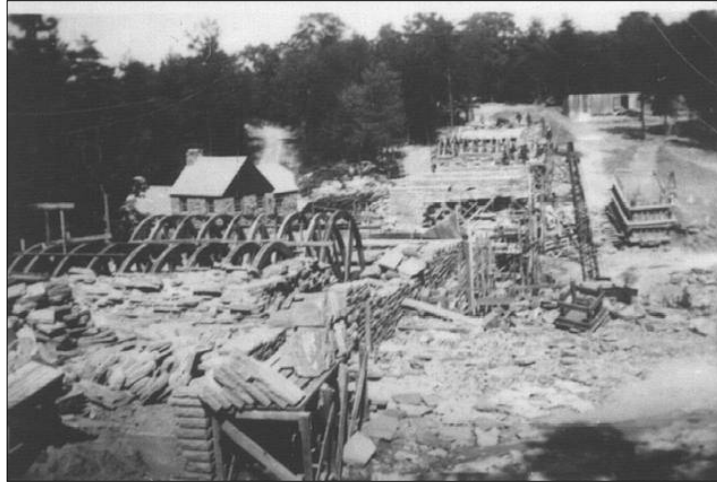
## **FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt with Tennessee Governor Prentice Cooper**



Dept. of Conservation Photograph Collection, Box 34, File 120, Great Smoky Mountains Series, RG 82, 9/2/1940, TSLA. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Tennessee Gov. Prentice Cooper, and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at the dedication ceremony on September 2, 1940, for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Congress established this park on June 15, 1934.



## Civilian Conservation Corps projects during the 1930s



Looking Back at Tennessee Photograph Collection, CU038, DB #7132, TSLA. The building of the bridge and dam to create the lake in Cumberland Mountain State park by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers. The CCC, a New Deal program initiated by FDR, was responsible for employing thousands of men in public works projects during the Great Depression, including many in Tennessee.



## CCC Camps in Tennessee



CCC 1934-1940, RG 93, Box 1, Folder 15, Scrapbook, donated by Sam Brown, Company 1466, P-53, Camp Sam Houston, Pikeville, Tennessee. On the upper left, a view of workers and dogs standing in front of the Forestry Headquarters. Below, men carrying their work tools from the work shop in the Educational Department, photo by Spencer and Wyckolf. The CCC men were involved in various types of work, including forestry, erosion control, dam construction, parks construction and development, and more. More than two million out-of-work men were given jobs under this program. Those between the ages of 18 and 25 whose families were on relief were eligible for work. They were paid \$30, \$25 of which went directly to their families. Workers were also provided with free room and board, although facilities were quite simple. Other well-known New Deal programs include the Civilian Works Administration, the Works Progress Administration, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.



**Giles  
County,  
Tennessee  
schools**

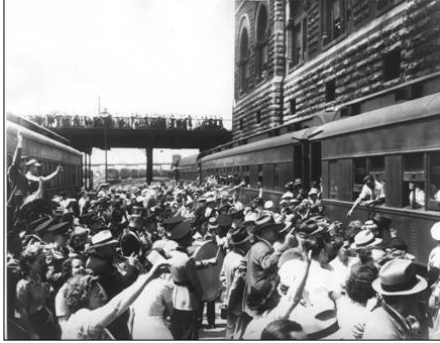
***Shown above,  
a school for  
white children***

***On the right, a  
“colored” school***




TSLA RG 273, Tennessee Department of Education, School House Photos, 1938-1942, Giles County elementary schools. On the top left, Pulaski School, microfilm roll 28, 1940. The school was a large, white elementary school that had 454 students enrolled and employed thirteen teachers. On the right, Round Hill School, 1941, microfilm roll 75, a “colored” school with 51 students enrolled and an average daily attendance of 28 students. The teachers at this school had two years of college education; a woman’s missionary society assisted the school in some capacity. According to the accompanying records, the school had a Bible but no atlas or almanac. There were no hot lunch facilities and no toilet paper. The list of improvements desired for the school included a drinking fountain, instructional material, and landscaping (trees and shrubs). For more information on African-American schools, see TSLA Record Group 91, State Board of Education. Many of the schools in this record group are Rosenwald schools: Sears president and Jewish philanthropist Julius Rosenwald established a foundation in 1917 dedicated to the “well being of mankind.” Through its focus on the plight of African Americans, the foundation constructed schools for black children in the South. Affectionately called “Rosenwald Schools” they were built cooperatively with each community. By the 1940s, there were more than 350 such schools in Tennessee. Nationwide, the fund educated well over a half-million students.

## Soldiers leaving Nashville for World War II service



Soldiers at Union Station in Nashville, Tennessee, saying goodbye to families on their way to war, circa 1943, from the Community Chest and United Givers Fund Scrapbook, TSLA. See also TSLA Photograph Collection, Drawer 19, Folder 42, DB #27973 on the left and DB #27972 on the right.

## Prisoner of War (POW) Identity Card from WWII



Name:	M i t c h e n e r
Vorname:	Hardy A.
Dienstgrad:	2..Lt.
Erk.-Marke:	5729 Kgflg. d. Lw. 3
Serv.-Nr.:	0 - 811 773
Nationalität:	USA

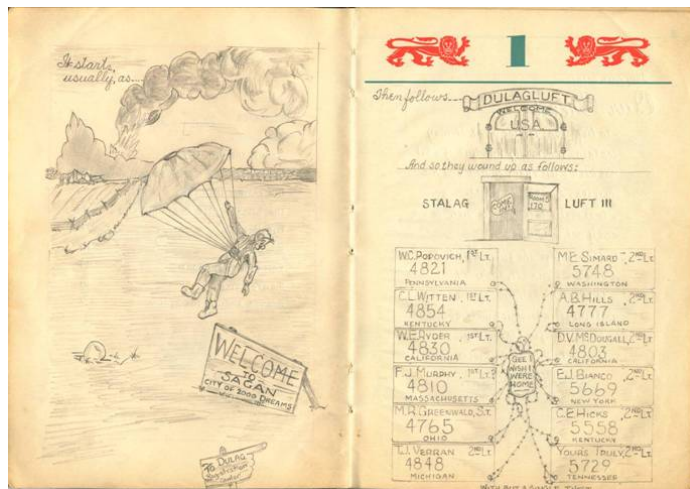
Baracke:	190
Raum:	5

W. 9708. 2877 K

*Handwritten notes:* VII, 112, and a large diagonal stamp reading "Stalag Luft III" with "1945" and "1/1" below it.

Hardy A. Mitchener Journal, TSLA. The German Prisoner of War (POW) identification card of Hardy A. Mitchener. Mitchener was a second lieutenant in the 509th Bombardment Squadron, 351st Bombardment Group, 8th Air Force stationed in Polebrook, England. His plane was shot down on 30 May 1944 during a bombing mission on an aircraft plant in Oschersleben. Mitchener was imprisoned at Stalag Luft III near Sagan, Germany (now Zagan, Poland). He was liberated by American troops around 29 April 1945.

## Detail from WW II POW's diary



Hardy A. Mitchener Journal, TSLA. The two pages shown are part of a diary kept by Hardy A. Mitchener, an American prisoner of war in Germany during World War II. The left portion is a drawing of a parachutist falling out of the sky after a plane crash. A sign reads "Welcome to Sagan, City of 2000 Dreams." Another sign reads, "To Dulag Registration Center." Dulag Luft was the central processing center for almost all Allied airmen. From there, they were shipped to the various Stalag Luft camps throughout Germany. The right page lists names of the prisoners, their rank, and their home states. The page includes whimsical drawings about entering the Dulag Luft.

## Cordell Hull (1871-1955)



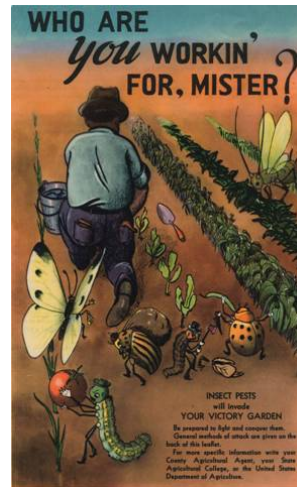
- Known as the “Father of the United Nations,” he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in establishing the United Nations
- Hull served as United States Secretary of State under FDR for eleven years



THS Picture Collection, Box 17, Folder 7, THS 193, DB #26193, TSLA. Cordell Hull is best known for being the United States Secretary of State from 1933-1944 under FDR and for his pivotal role in the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. Born near Byrdstown, in Pickett County, Tennessee, he began his political career in 1892 as a member of the Tennessee General Assembly. He was a staunch Democrat who had initially earned his reputation for being an opponent of the protective tariff. His views on this subject later changed, but he remained a Democrat for the duration of his career.



## World War II Victory Garden



Looking Back at Tennessee, CF071, DB #6191, TSLA. The image on the left shows a victory garden in the yard of a home during World War II. Approximately 20 million Americans tended their Victory Gardens during World War II. Americans were encouraged to grow and preserve their own food in order to help in the war effort. A week after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, gardeners stopped talking off Defense gardens, and began calling them Victory gardens. As food became scarce and prices increased, more Americans planted vegetables in their Victory gardens. The image on the right is a broadside poster from April 1943, "Who Are *You* Workin' For, Mister?" The bottom text reads, "Insect Pests will invade your victory garden – Be prepared to fight and conquer them. General methods of attack are given on the back of this leaflet. The document was published by the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine and the Extension Service.



## Scrap rubber drive during World War II



Governor Cooper Papers, Scrap Rubber Drive, War Memorial Building, Nashville, Tennessee, circa 1942, TSLA. Rubber drives were conducted during World War II so ordinary citizens could help contribute to the war effort.

## World War II broadsides



Broadside Collection, TSLA. These publicity posters encouraged Americans to conserve valuable resources such as rubber and gasoline in order to contribute to the war effort.



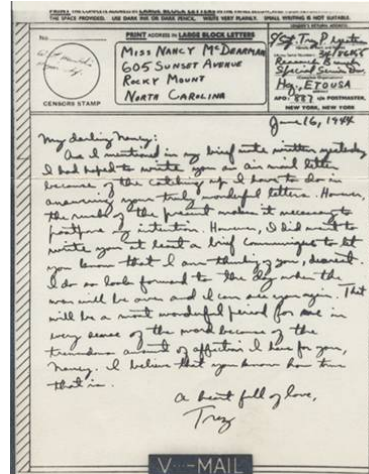
19

## Vultee Aircraft Plant in Nashville



On the left, the Vultee Aircraft Corporation during World War II shows men and women building parts for P-38 Lightning fighter aircraft. Several women are pictured; in fact, approximately one-third of the employees in the factory were women. On the right, World War II housing in Nashville showing the trailer camp for Vultee workers on Murfreesboro Road. Both images are from the TSLA Photograph Collection, on the left, Drawer 19, Folder 59, DB#3750, and on the right, Drawer 17, Folder 115, DB#3363, circa 1941.

## V-mail (Victory mail) from American Soldiers



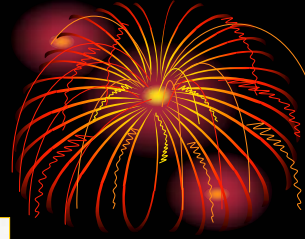
Letters from the Yeatman-Polk Collection Addition, 1934-1955, VII-M-3, TSLA Accession number 89-199, Box 6, Correspondence from November 19, 1942, to July 27, 1944, England. (Yeatman was drafted while a graduate student and served as a Military Clerk in England for two and a half years.) The letter on the left is Christmas card, and the letter on the right is a letter from Sgt. Trez P. Yeatman to his sweetheart, Nancy McDearman. Yeatman returned home from the war safely and married Nancy in 1946. The use of V-mail, known as Victory Mail, was encouraged during the war because it saved cargo space on ships. Specially designed letter sheets were microfilmed and then “blown up” for readers overseas. The amount of space saved by V-mail was remarkable, although not everyone used it. The thirty-seven mail bags required for 150,000 one-page letters could be condensed into 1 mail sack if they were microfilmed and transformed into V-mail.

### Transcription:

My darling Nancy:

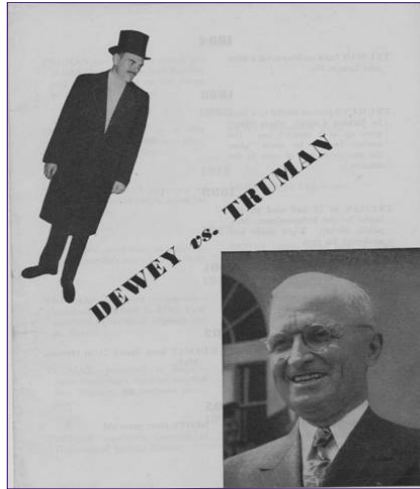
As I mentioned in my brief note written yesterday I had hoped to write you an air mail letter because of the catching up I have to do in answering your truly wonderful letters. However, the rush of the present makes it necessary to postpone my intention. However, I did want to write you at least a brief communique to let you know that I am thinking of you, dearest. I do so look forward to the day when the war will be over and I can see you again. That will be a most wonderful period for me in every sense of the word because of the tremendous amount of affection I have for you, Nancy. I believe that you know

# World War II Victory Parade



TSLA Photograph Collection, Drawer 26, Folder 199, circa 1945, DB #5167, Nashville, Tennessee, TSLA. World War II soldiers parade in downtown Nashville past the Davidson County Courthouse and City Hall.

## Truman takes the lead in 1948



Vice-president Harry Truman became president when FDR died in 1945. When Truman asked Eleanor Roosevelt if there was anything he could do for her, she responded, “Is there anything we can do for you? You are the one in trouble now.”

*Despite polls predicting an overwhelming Thomas E. Dewey victory, Truman won the 1948 Presidential election.*

TSLA Library Collection. This campaign brochure for the 1948 Presidential elections touted Harry S. Truman’s qualifications over those of Thomas E. Dewey. For the year 1945, the pamphlet reads, “TRUMAN became President, directed victorious completion of war against Japan and Germany, turned to tasks of demobilization.” and “DEWEY built up pro-business record, cutting big income taxes.”